

J. Christien

Bishop Colenso

honestly answered.

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BISHOP COLENSO

HONESTLY ANSWERED.

TWO SERMONS,

PREACHED BY THE

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A WORD BY WAY OF "PREFACE."

THESE two Sermons have gone to press as they were delivered. Had they been intended as a *book* reply to the Bishop, they would have been cast into a different mould. Still, the arguments would remain the same. *They* must be estimated at their real value. Touching the answer embodied in the second Sermon, the preacher would be glad to receive the opinions or suggestions of any of his hearers or readers, which shall have the like honest consideration that has led to the preparation of these pages for his pulpit.

JOHN CHRISTIEN,

23, *Holford Square, W.C.*

BISHOP COLENSO

ANSWERED.

"They have MOSES and the PROPHETS ———."

Luke xvi. 29.

MEN AND BRETHREN,

Jesus puts these words into the mouth of Abraham, who in the other and eternal world is parabled as holding converse with an unhappy Dives. When He says *Moses*, He refers to the *one* roll or volume of the Jewish Scriptures called the *Law*, or the *Book of the Law*, or as by Josephus, the *Holy Books of Moses*. It comprises those portions of *our* Bible known as *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Numbers*, *Leviticus*, and *Deuteronomy*, and as a whole is commonly denominated the *Pentateuch*. It contains the accounts of the creation of the world and of the fall of man—the outlines of the annals of early history, a full recital of the Jewish nation, from their entrance into Egypt to their arrival on the confines of the Promised Land—and the whole of their laws, civil, moral, and ceremonial. The whole five books were written in the most ancient and pure Hebrew, and are characterised with the stamp of the same author. No doubt, several occasions when Jesus quoted Moses, or referred to him, or appealed to him, will recur to your minds; such as, when delivering the sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 17, *et al.*)—when the Pharisees asked Him concerning divorce (Mark x. 2.)—when the Sadducees enquired concerning the resurrection (12, 19, 26), where Jesus refers to an *historic fact*, not to a law—and again, when the lawyer would have eternal life (Luke x. 26)—when walking with the two to Emmaus, 24, 27—and when with the eleven, 24, 44—and again, in His reproof, John vii. 19. On these occasions Jesus authenticates Moses and his writings, treats the Pentateuch as a work of appeal, and directly

Jesus authenticates
Moses.

conveys the impression that it is of God ; unless, indeed, we are to accept the impious suggestion,* either that Jesus quoted Moses *ignorantly*, because He knew no better ; or *deceitfully*, He merely stooping to adopt a prevailing notion, though He knew it to be false—the which be very far from us !

2. Now, it is the authenticity and historic truthfulness of the Pentateuch which is called in question this winter. And that, by no mean man ; but by a man occupying the distinguished post of a Bishop in the State Church, an earnest and a seemingly honest, religious man, a fair Hebrew scholar, of bright intellectual attainments, and a marked Cambridge mathematician. To such a man and mind have occurred difficulties and seeming contradictions, while translating the Bible into the Zulu tongue, which perhaps seldom present themselves to the *general* reader, who reads *Moses*, not so much as pages of national history, as pages of providential occurrences, illustrative of the scheme of redemption, and of the doctrines of salvation by the atonement of Christ. Says the Bishop, “The result of my enquiry is this, that I have arrived at the conviction, that the Pentateuch, as a whole, cannot possibly have been written by Moses, or by anyone acquainted personally with the facts which it professes to describe ; and further, that the so-called Mosaic narrative, by whomsoever written, and though imparting to us, as I fully believe it does, revelations of the Divine will and character, cannot be regarded as *historically true*.”† And again, “I wish to repeat most distinctly, that my reason for no longer receiving the Pentateuch as historically true, is not that I find insuperable difficulties with regard to the *miracles*, or supernatural *revelations* of Almighty God, recorded in it, but solely that I cannot, as a true man, consent any longer to shut my eyes to the absolute, palpable self-contradictions of the narrative.”‡ And yet again, “We need only consider well the statements made in the books themselves, by whomsoever written, about matters which they profess to narrate as facts of common history—if we do this, we shall find them to contain a series of manifest contradictions and inconsistencies, which leave us, it would seem, no alternative but to conclude that the main portions of the story of the Exodus, though based, probably, on some real historical foundations, yet are certainly not to be regarded as historically true.”§ And these conclusions he entirely bases upon the

* See Bishop Colenso, pp. 30, 31.

† Colenso, sec. 7. ‡ sec. 10. § sec. 11.

IMPOSSIBILITY of the *number of Israel*, which the Bible states to have *entered* Egypt with Jacob, and to have *left* Egypt with Moses.

3. Brethren, these are startling statements for *anyone* to make. Had they been born into the world, this second time, from another unknown and illiterate Tom Paine, perhaps they would soon have pined away and died : but, coming from a *Bishop*, from one high in authority, from one above all, engaged in the conversion of a heathen Afric tribe, no wonder they should produce a profound sensation, and become the topic of every factory and the theme of every newspaper. Yet I pray ye, FEAR NOT

FOR THE BIBLE. No ! It is a grand rock, whose hoary-crowned
 No fear for the Bible. summit is elevated far above the violent winds that sweep
 across earth's plains, pointing with uplifted brow, heavenwards.

Against *its* foundations the heaviest seas may swell and dash, but all in vain. Coming on, in full swing of the storm, waves may groan and thunder, but beating against *this* rock, they shall be beaten back again, harmless foam and spray. Oh ! the Bible has been often questioned—*never refuted* ! Its foundations have been often examined—*never undermined* ! It has been assaulted by brilliant talent, keen wit, acute intellect, yet IT STANDS, IT FLOURISHES ! Circling time, which weakens, decays, fritters away all else, has but strengthened this *Rock* of every believer's faith and hope, and but added to the girth, strength, glory and fruitfulness of this *Tree of Life*. What ! fear for the Bible, because a *Bishop* finds in it difficulties *he* counts inexplicable ? What ! fear for yon life-boat, because tossed sadly, now high, now low, and swung now on these waves, now on those, by the sea, angered in a storm ! What ! fear for Sinai's mountain, because the winds surge seas of sands against its sides, and pealing thunders and flashing lightnings play round its craggy heights ? What ! fear for yon stars, because our murky clouds and fogs dim their brightness ! fear for the rising of the sun to-morrow morning, because a dark night has come up from the East and spread all o'er the sky ? Oh, no, NEVER ! Yet as soon *fear* for these as for the Bible. The experience of eighteen centuries prove the Bible, as a whole, to be an unexhausted, exhaustless Book of God, a book of all books, a full-orbed sun of heaven, against which it is madness for a man to cast up his handful of earth, and say "I have eclipsed its brightness, I have quenched its light." Who have explored the depths of the ocean ? Who have traversed God's fields, counted the stars, and stood on the utmost boundary of unacred space ? Who ? So, though ages have passed in the

study of the Bible, though multitudes have been occupied in its investigation, though immense libraries have been written illustrative of its truths and statements, yet there are nooks and corners, aye, whole fields, unsearched, unknown. The more we read its pages, the more we study its statements,—the more deep, more full, sounds the voice of Jesus, saying, “SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.”

4. But it is with that portion of the Bible called the *Pentateuch*, we have more especially to do just now. Though, of course, the greater includes the less,—the whole, its several parts. Now the oldest *human* historians we know are, Sanchoniathon, some few fragments of whose history of Phœnicia have come down to us in a Greek garb; Berosus, some portions of whose history of Chaldea are preserved in the works of Jôsephus; Ctesias, who wrote a history of the Assyrians and Persians; and Manetho, remnants of whose Egyptian history are yet extant. I might bring before you this night the very words of these ancients, who each testify that Moses, (who wrote 500 years before the first of them, and more than a 1,000 years before the last) was the leader of the Jews and the founder of their laws.* I might shew you, age by age, from Ezra *back* to Joshua himself, that these books were ever esteemed as from God through His servant Moses.† I might prove to you that they *must* have been written in the time of Moses, from the *pure* Hebrew which characterizes them, and separates them from the later writings of the Bible; also from the use of Egyptian words, which never could have been used by a native of Palestine.‡ I might shew ye, too, the utter impossibility of the “Law of Moses” ever being propounded after his decease, or palmed off upon the Jews of later times. Or I might illustrate the credibility of the writings, by appealing to the frequent list of *genealogies* which they contain; and which, seeing that the distribution of property depended upon them, if incorrect would at once have been ignored: also to the frequent *repetitions* of the same matters, which by their general agreement, plainly assert the books to be written as *passing narratives*, while they dispel all notion of fictitiousness or designed forgery§:—and, to the *inseparableness* of the historical statements from the burdensome laws and institutions; which

* Bp. Newton’s works, vol. 1, p. 32. † Bp. Marsh, Five Books of Moses, pp. 6—10

‡ Horne’s Introduction, vol. 1, p. 63.

§ Dr. Graves, Lectures on Pentateuch, vol. 1, abridged by Horne.

latter were evidently founded on a belief of the former ;—I might appeal also to the *present existence of the Jews*, which affords a living proof, not only of the general reality of the history contained in the Old Testament but of an attachment to its laws and institutions, such as there is no example of in the history of any other people on record :* or I might take you to the East ; and Egypt itself, the murky Nile, its hieroglyphic records, its embalmed mummies and its stupendous pyramids and ruins ; and the Sea of Edom, as it pours its waters northward towards the Great Sea ; and the desert lands that stretch beyond, with their few remaining palm-trees and wells, not omitting that Marah water, which is bitter to this day ; and the green heights of Sinai and Horeb, of Hor and Seir ; the engraved stones of the Amalekites and the rocky cities of Edom, *all* should find a voice to speak for Moses, the adopted prince of the house of Pharaoh, the shepherd of Jethro the prince of Midian, and the leader of the people of Israel.

5. But however satisfactory such evidences might prove, they would not meet Bishop Colenso's difficulties. *His* would still remain, casting their gaunt shadows athwart tender consciences, and stones of stumbling in the way of unbelievers. I, therefore, purpose solving to-night that incredible and impossible statement of the Bible, which the Bishop places *first* in his book, His *second* matter, which occupies the greater part of his volume, and which he carries to the most frivolous extremes, if God give me wisdom and grace, I hope to answer shortly in a second sermon.

Bishop
Colenso's
evidences
against the
Pentateuch.

The Bishop's position is this :—

If the Bible means that sixty-six persons really went down into Egypt with Jacob, then Jacob's son, Judah, who was only forty-two years old, according to the Bible, must have taken with him two great grandsons : but this is an impossibility : therefore the narrative which Moses gives is untrue.

6. Now in order that this statement may be thoroughly answered, and the difficulty be cleared away from our minds, I shall propound and consider two questions, praying you to give them that attention which the matter demands.

Answer to
Colenso's
first
assertion.

* Propædia Prophetica, W. R. Lyall, Lecture 5. quo.

7.

First question :

What was the number of Israel who went into Egypt and sojourned there ?

First, Gen. xli. 26. "All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins (besides his sons' wives) all the souls were *three score and six*." Again, Gen. xli. 27, "All the souls of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt, were *three score and ten*." This number, seventy, is confirmed in Exodus i. 5, and Deut. x. 22, and seemingly becomes a commemorative number, from the instructions contained in Exodus xxiv. 1—9 and elsewhere. But again, Acts vii. 14, Stephen in his speech before martyrdom, says, "Then sent Joseph and called his father Jacob to him and all his kindred, *three score and fifteen* souls." With this number seventy-five, agrees the Septuagint† in two places, viz. Gen. xli. 27 and Exodus i. 5, while in Deut. x. 22 it says *seventy* only ; a most strange inconsistency, and shewing how *by translations* the original Scripture of God has been open to errors and tampering. This is the more glaring here, from the fact that in Gen. xli, in order to make up the list of seventy-five, there have been interpolated into verse twenty, *five* more names, viz. a son and grandson to Manasseh, and two sons and a grandson to Ephraim.

7. Here then, we have three various numbers given as settling in Egypt, 66, 70, and 75. A Bible difficulty ! And indeed it has called forth many solutions and various ; some of them farfetched and most unsatisfactory. But with all reverence for more learned fathers, it seems to me, they make an inconsistency and a difficulty, where really there are none. In the first passage quoted, it says, "All the souls that came *with Jacob* into Egyyt, which *issued from his loins* (except his sons' wives) were *sixty and six*. This exactly agrees with the lists given in the preceding verses of the chapter, Gen. xli.

Reuben, and his four sons, v. 9.

Simeon, and his six sons, v. 10.

Levi, and his three sons, v. 11.

Judah, and his three sons (*two* others having died), and two grandsons, v. 12.

Issachar, and his four sons, v. 13.

* Bishop Colenso, sections 19, 20.

† A translation of the Old Testament into Greek, made probably by the Sanhedrim of Alexandria, about 280 years before Christ. See Horne, vol. 2. 164—169.

Gad, and his seven sons, v. 16.

Zebulun, and his three sons, v. 14.

Asher, and his four sons and two grandsons, and one daughter, v. 17.

Benjamin, and his ten sons, v. 21.

Dan, and his one son, v. 23.

Naphtali, and his four sons, v. 24.

And Jacob's daughter Dinah, v. 15.

Making a total of Jacob's *own*, "which came out of his loins, and which came with him into Egypt," *three score and six*, as v. 26. Now these 66 came "with Jacob," therefore Jacob himself would make the number 67, and there were *already in Egypt*, belonging to Jacob, Joseph and his two sons, v. 20, 27, making *three* more to be added to the 67, so that "all the souls of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt were *three score and ten*, as v. 27., and as stated afterwards in Ex. i. 5, and in Deut. x. 22. There is no inconsistency, or Bible difficulty in these two texts. Nor is there in the third. Stephen says, "Joseph sent and called his father Jacob, *and all his kindred*,"—mark that expression, "*three score and fifteen souls*." This seems very plain. It is not a quotation from the Septuagint, nor is the ingenious conjecture of Beza needed, that the word *παντες* or *παντως* *all*, should be put instead of *πεντε* *five*, and so the v. read "three score and ten souls *in all*;" and the annotation of Whitby is equally unsatisfactory.* Stephen is evidently stating the number of "all the kindred," *i.e.*, Jacob's *own* children, sixty-six, and also his sons' *wives*, which the writer of Gen. xli. 26, explicitly declares *he* has not reckoned. Now what says the Bible concerning the wives? From Gen. xxxv. 19, we learn Jacob had buried Rachel, and from xlix. 31, Leah also; and we have no mention made of Zilpah and Bilhah, whence it appears Jacob came to Egypt *without a wife*. So also did his son Judah, xxxviii. 12, and so also did Simeon, as we gather from xli. 10, for a Canaanitess would not be reckoned of the "kindred," Gen. xxviii. 1, *et. al.* Then Joseph's *eleven* brethren only brought with them into Egypt *nine* wives. Add these nine wives to the three score and six, "which came out of Jacob's loins," and we have the words of Stephen literally true, "Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his kindred, *three score and fifteen souls*."†

* Whitby, Commentary *in loc.* 2nd vol., note. Doddridge, Expositor, vol. 4, p. 91, note.

† See Dr. Hales, Analysis of Chron., vol. 2, part 1.

Thus it is evident that the Bible agrees with itself, there is no inconsistency. A careful searching dispels all need or warrant for ingenious, but injudicious criticisms and speculations.

8. We now come to our second question:—

Having ascertained the number which went into Egypt, could it have been possible for Judah to take his great grandsons, as he is said to have done? Gen. xlv. 12.

Bishop Colenso says, “incredible,” and he expresses himself “pained” at the “shifts,” and remarks of various commentators on the subject, especially of Kurtz, Hengstenberg, and Pool. And truly an *honest, unsophisticated* mind cannot read some of the miserable shifts resorted to, without being at once *shocked and annoyed*. I say fearlessly and feelingly, for divines to tell us that the grandsons and great-grandsons of Jacob, *though they were not born*, yet were *in their fathers*, and therefore were reckoned with the seventy who went into Egypt; to tell us that Jacob’s sons married at *twelve or fourteen years of age*, and had several wives; or to tell us that it was *perfectly indifferent* to the sacred historian whether he said 50, 60, or 70, but that he fixed on the 70, because it was the theocratic number;* I say, that to tell the world such miserable and shameless nonsense, is calculated the rather to create infidels, than to convince them of the untenableness of their objections. Brethren, there is no need for statements like these; and I beseech ye, lower not the blessed Book of God by adopting them.

Says Bishop Colenso, “Now Judah was forty-two *years old*, when he went down into Egypt.”† On this assumption, he and the commentators I have alluded to build their theories, knowing that in the ordinary way, it would be impossible for a man of that age to have great grandsons as Judah is stated to have had. It is in this assumption, he and they are wrong Let us see:—

From the time of Jacob coming to Laban, to his leaving Laban, was twenty years. So we gather from what he says to Laban, Gen. xxxi. 38. At the time of his leaving, he had eleven sons; Benjamin was born afterwards, xxxv. 18; and none of his sons were then married, xxxii 22, and xxxiii. 2.

* See Kurtz, Hengstenberg, Pool, who are now so frequently quoted.

† Sec 20 and note.

Joseph is born six years before Jacob flees from Laban, comp. xxx. 25, and xxxi. 14; and he is seventeen years with his father and brethren, shepherding; and *then* is sold and carried into Egypt, xxxvii. 2. So from the time of Jacob coming to Laban and marrying Rachel and Leah, to the time of Joseph being sold into slavery, was thirty-one years.* Literally xxxvii. 2 is, "Joseph, son, 17 years, was a shepherd (or shepherding) with his brethren in the flock." From which and *what follows*, I understand, that for seventeen years Joseph lived at home with his brethren, feeding and tending the flocks, and at the end of that period was sold into slavery. Then the sacred writer proceeds to give an account of Joseph from *that* time, to the time of his interpreting Pharaoh's dream in chapter xli. when he again alludes to the years that had elapsed. Verse 46 of that chapter is literally, "And Joseph, son, thirty years, in his standing to, before the face, Pharaoh." Which, taken in conjunction with the circumstances said to have taken place in the interim, both respecting Joseph in Egypt, and his brethren in Canaan, I think may honestly be considered as meaning—*not* that Joseph was then thirty years *old*, but that he had been by himself, away from his brethren, thirty years, when he was called into Pharaoh's presence. † Supposing it thus then, Jacob had been married sixty-one years—fourteen years before Joseph was born, Joseph was seventeen when sold, and he had now been in Egypt thirty years, making in all sixty-one years. Add to this number the seven years of plenty, which followed Pharaoh's dream, and two years of famine (it was in the 2nd year of famine they all came to Egypt) and we then have a total of seventy years, from Jacob's marrying to his descent into Egypt with his family; and Judah his fourth son, who married about the time *when* Joseph was sold, Gen. xxxviii. 1, was not as Bishop Colenso and others assume, only forty-two years *old*, but had actually been married thirty-nine years,—time enough to allow of the birth of Hezron and Hamul, xli. 12, "little ones," who with his brother Asher's grandsons were carried down into Egypt, "in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry them," xli. 5.

9. Now that my interpretation is not mere conjecture but the *real meaning* of Moses, is capable of proof, from the unequivocal and natural

* Or Qy. if not more correctly, Joseph was 6 years old when his father left Laban—and *then* was shepherding with his brethren afterwards 17 years.

† I would leave to the learned in Hebrew to discuss the strength of the word בן—Qy. if not a mere gloss? Qy. if not the usual Bible way, to speak *not* of the *full* age at such a time, but of the years in this place and in that?

manner in which it reconciles all parts of the narrative, and from incidental figures and statements. I will mention one only. It is stated, Gen. xxv. 26, Isaac was sixty when Esau and Jacob were born. When they were forty, Esau marries to the grief of his parents, xxvi. 34. Time passes on, and the father's eyes grow dim. By deceit Jacob obtains the blessing, and is sent away to Laban, to get a wife, xxviii. 1—4. Now supposing this to have taken place twenty years after Esau's marriage. It could not be much sooner, otherwise Isaac would not be "*old*" xxvii. 1, and it could not be much later, otherwise Jacob would be beyond marrying age. Jacob would now be 60; Isaac 120. Now Jacob was with Laban twenty years; so when he left, he would be 80, and Isaac 140. Eleven years after leaving Laban, Joseph is sold; Jacob would then be 91, and Isaac 151. But by the Bible, Jacob was 130 years old, when Pharaoh asked him, Gen. xlvii. 9, and while Joseph was in Egypt, before Jacob went there, he buried Isaac, who was when he died 180 years of age, xxxv. 28. Now instead of taking our version as correct, "Joseph was thirty years old," take my rendering, that Joseph was thirty years in Egypt, when he interpreted Pharaoh's dream,—and then followed the seven years of plenty and the two of famine, before Jacob came to Egypt:—add these 39 years to the 91, Jacob's age when Joseph was sold, and we have the *exact years* Jacob tells Pharaoh, viz. 130. Add the same 39 to the 151, Isaac's age when Joseph was sold, and it gives 190, making out that Isaac had been dead some ten years, when the family moved into Egypt; agreeing well with the Bible story.

10. Thus vanishes Bishop Colenso's difficulty, and his Bible untruth. Judah went down into Egypt with his father, and it *was possible* for him to carry his "little ones"—*his great grandsons*—with him "in the wagons;" and, without a doubt, the Bible story is *literally correct*.

Oh! strange want of critical judgment in a learned Bishop! Surpassing bluntness of understanding in a doctor of divinity! I do arraign Bishop Colenso before the bar of honest judgment, for a wicked attempt to subvert the faith and confidence of general readers in the Bible!

Sirs and brethren, hear me!

11. What! shall we throw discredit on the *whole* Bible story of Egypt and the Exodus for so small a difficulty? Dare we efface every other

The evidence of Inspiration not to be over-
 set.
 evidence of the inspiration of the Scriptures because during a long course of ages, written, transcribed, and translated by the finger of man, it here and there upon it bears the soil of the dust of which man is compounded? A thousand times we would repeat, loud and louder—no! What! because ye give me a *seared leaf*, with here a small rent, and there a patch of dirt upon it, into the which it fell last autumn,—shall I say it never lived, never was green, never breathed the air of heaven, never clung to the arm of the oak? Yet as sensible, as wise were I, to say *that*, as to say what this Bishop says of the Pentateuch. Oh! the miracle is, that we have it in our *own* language so clear, distinct. Its very preservation is a matter of greatest marvel; its general English correctness is a wonder of wonders. It is now 3,500 years since Moses wrote it. Within 600 years of his death, and the language ceased to be spoken by the Jews; and ages before Jesus was born, they were unable to comprehend the original Hebrew of Moses, without a Chaldee paraphrase. Moreover, every copy, till within the past 400 years or so, was transcribed by hand; liable to omissions, misplacements, alterations and additions, both of words and letters. Add to these the liability to err, in the varied translations of the inspired historian's own words into the words of other languages, and our astonishment is, *not* at the *many* differences which have crept into the modern Scriptures, *but at the few*; we are amazed, *not* at the difficulty of understanding the Books, *but at their sublime simplicity*; and a wiser nobler employment far, than quibbling at apparent and minor contradictions, should be the compiling of its history.

12. Oh! it is a Book of wonders, is this Bible, this English Bible! In the pathway of the planets, in the progress of empires, in the life of man, in the falling of the autumn leaves, and in the sunseting and sun-rising, we discover the *leadings and providence* of the same Mind which

The evidence of the preservation of the Bible.
 built up the starry firmament, and of whom not an animal, not a vegetable, not an insect of the sunbeams, but says, "The hand that made me is Divine!" And the Bible, even in its

English garb, carries with it the same evidence. Had it been possible, it had long ago been swept from the earth. Peoples have been forbidden to read it; more than once it has been publicly burned; and popes and priests and infidels have conspired to corrupt and destroy it: but, like a vessel filled with the air of heaven, cast upon the sea of time, though tossed about sadly, and of the restless waters carried hither and

thither, it has sunk not; if it has disappeared from one shore, it has presently been drifted upon another. Sirs, this Bible cannot perish in the deep sea of oblivion. It is filled with the breath of God. His unseen hand has written its history. Though the nations of whom Moses spake have faded from among men; though not a line of their story has reached us; though their cities have perished, their very sites unknown; though the homes of Edom are a stony waste; though Babylon has dwindled to a mound in the desert; though Nineveh lies buried in the sands; though on Grecian heights and plains, and on Roman hills, the temples of the gods stand in their mouldering ruins; and though, since the days of Moses and the prophets, the world has been turned upside down; *yet*, rivalling the stars in their fixedness, rivalling the angels in their immortality, the written truths of the Bible, transcribed a thousand thousand times by the feeble, erring hand of man, are *to-night* read in our ears!

Sirs, is not God with the Bible?

13. But more. Add to the history of its preservation, the history of its *deeds*. Remember *how*, whether back in the far past, when Israel read its words, scarce dry from the pen of Moses himself; or whether, when exiled from the land of promise, their sons and sons' sons sat down by Babel's stream, and read the story of the Exodus from the captivity of Egypt; or whether, by a fond mother's knee, the future man spelled out his first lessons of truth; or whether, in our own land, preached in pulpits, read in the chambers of death, pondered by the fireside, or learned in our schools; or whether, on the strands of Africa, among the myriads of India, the idolaters of the East, or the wild heathen of the West; *how*, wherever it has come, it has unfolded *Light* and quickened into *Life*; *how*, at all times and in all places, it has proved a powerful mean of elevating man, ennobling man, enriching man; has brought him nearer to his Maker; has raised earth nigher to heaven; and, like the sun of summer, has bathed the dark spots of earth in beauty, and called latent principles into life and action; *how* it has made every man who has believed its words and acted on his belief, a *happier* man in himself, and a *heavenlier* man in his character. It has had this effect upon *me*, upon *some* of you, upon thousands of our land, upon myriads of the world!

Sirs, who then dare deny God is with the Bible?

The
evidence of
the power
of the
Bible.

14. What then? Supposing—*supposing* Bishop Colenso's difficulties were *real* difficulties; supposing they were all really in the oldest writings of Moses which we have, albeit our most ancient manuscripts

Differences
in present
Pentateuch
no ground
for discard-
ing it.

are under a thousand years of age; should we *even then* be justified in saying the Pentateuch is not of God? *Certainly not.* Shall a blind man, though he feel the warmth of the sun, yet because he turns his sightless eyes upward and cannot see it, shall he perversely say, There is no sun in the heavens? Or shall a son receive a letter from his father, who is afar off, but because some part of it is obliterated, or part of it destroyed by the sea-water on the voyage; or because it was written so long time since, that the ink is faded, and some words and sentences scarcely intelligible, shall that son say the father never wrote that part of it at all? Yet as justifiable, as prudent should be such conduct, such speech, as for a man to say the Pentateuch is a myth, an allegory, an historical untruth; in other words, not of God, a lie!

15. But we have shewn, that to believe in Christ necessitates belief in Moses, for He spake of him and appealed to his writings as authentic and true.* Now, not to believe in Christ is to throw away the key of the sacred ark; is to take away the soul from the body. *But we do believe in Christ Jesus, the Son of man and Son of God, who came into the world to save sinners, according to the Word of the Lord.* What then? Shall we stand at the foot of the mountain, and drink of the crystal stream of truth, which flows from its base into the desert—shall we drink of it, to our refreshment, our comfort, our joy—and *yet*, because high up, near the summit, we cannot see the silvery stream, but here and there it

Receiving
Christ, we
must
receive
Moses.

seems murky, or is covered with brushwood, or lost sight of amid the craggy clefts—shall we stand, and say, Oh! this stream does not flow from those heights, that water up yonder is not the same water as this, it is murky and bitter—don't believe it comes from the same spring. Shall we say *so*? Oh! God forbid we should be such fools in sacred things! High up in the atmosphere of Patriarchs and Moses *the truth of God* bubbled forth from beneath His yet higher throne; and through succeeding ages, it has come down, down, down, gathering strength and fulness on its way, until now, *in our English Bible*, though perhaps, here and there upon its surface, it bears

* See section 1 of this sermon.

some of the brushwood of time, yet *here*, in our English Bible, is the same precious truth of God, "A river which makes glad the city of God." Oh! I bless God for it—I believe its words—I drink of its doctrines—I LOVE IT.

16. Oh, Sirs and brethren, after all the troubling of the waters by critics and unbelievers, they are sweet, very sweet; and far below the surface there are jewels to be found, very precious. Oh! "search the Scriptures." Ye have Moses, the Prophets, and the Gospels, "Search the Scriptures." Search them daily.

The great
work,
search the
Scriptures.

Not from curiosity merely, albeit curiosity and learning are amply remunerated for the search; but search them endeavouring to extract from them, the *sense*, the *truth*, the *doctrine*, they are intended to convey: and as ye gather these, treasure them up in your heart, obey them, live upon them, "Hold fast that thou hast." So ye shall have balsam for a wounded heart, a pillow for an aching head, a staff for manhood's hand, a crutch for tottering age, and a sure anchor of hope, when amid death's swelling waves:—and in that other world, that eternal world, when ye shall hear the angel swear, "Time shall be no longer," when ye shall see death, the grim reaper, sitting sadly on the tombstones, because there are no more men and women to die, when ye shall behold sun, moon, and stars, attendant mourners at the burial of a sin-defaced world, *then* ye shall understand the full meaning of those sayings of the Lord, "IT IS EASIER FOR HEAVEN AND EARTH TO PASS, THAN FOR ONE TITTLE OF THE LAW TO FAIL," and again, "HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY, BUT MY WORDS SHALL NOT PASS AWAY."

"ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

2 Tim. iii. 16.

MEN AND BRETHREN,

These words of the apostle Paul are intelligible to us all. Scripture is divinely inspired, not merely while it was written, God breathing through the writers from Moses downwards; but also, while it is being read, God breathing through the Scripture, and the Scripture breathing Him. Hence it is so profitable for "doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness."* "*All Scripture is inspired;*"—as if Paul should say, "Thou hast known the holy letters, Timothy; well then, they are all given by the breath of God; they breathe God." We do not read anywhere of an exception to this declaration; accordingly, in no man do we acknowledge a right to hazard any. The Spirit of the living God,—that one pure, unchanging breath,—"moved the holy men of old to write and speak, that the man of God, of every age and clime, "may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Yes, the God who called into existence the world, called into existence the Bible; the God who has superintended the world, has superintended the Bible; but man, evil-inclined man, has put the stain of his hands upon both. Still, for all that he has done so, the *World* is a beautiful world, all the year round; and the "*Word of God*" is pure, converting the soul.

2. Now, if it be allowable to place one portion of the Bible before another,—if we may distinguish in the firmament of the Scriptures the more glorious constellations and stars of the first magnitude; we give the preference to the *historical* books. I tell ye why. It is to the historical books that the most striking and respectful testimonies are rendered. What is there more holy in the Old Testament than the Pentateuch? What is there greater in the New than the four Gospels? To what did the prophets and the Apostles continually refer? Was it not to the tales of the fathers and the sweet stories of old?

Historical portions of the Bible, the preferable.

* Bengel in loc.

Oh! I would have ye remark, that the *histories* in the Bible have not been given us, merely for the transmission to future ages, of some memorials of the past. No, they are here written to make known unto us by facts, the CHARACTER OF GOD HIMSELF. They are the mirror of providence and grace. Like as the brooklet's clear bosom reflects the glory and beauties of the sun and sky; so, the histories of the Bible reflect God's thoughts, God's designs, God's heart, God's heaven. And more than this. They are written to reveal unto us THE DEEP THINGS OF MAN. When ye read the narratives of this book, from the very style in which they are written, do they not try your consciences? As ye bend over the story of its page, does not a secret motive, a hidden fault, and many a thought come forth, which, but for it, would only have been known in the great day, when the Lord will bring to light things hid in darkness, and will make manifest the purposes of men's hearts? * Verily, on no account, could we spare the historical portions of the Bible; nay, not a single story could we permit to be expunged.

3. But, Sirs, it is the *historical* portion of the Bible which Bishop Colenso calls in question. He boldly impugns the accuracy of the books of Moses; nay, he is continually using the words "impossible" and "historically untrue," in reference to the narratives of Moses.

4. Nor does it add to the credit for honesty and uprightness of desire and intention, which the Bishop so labours to impress upon his readers in the preface, that while refusing to accept the explanations of the most learned of commentators, *in no single instance does he attempt an explanation of his own, or in any way endeavour to reconcile the differences which he avers to have discovered.* On the contrary, a spirit of perverseness and infidelity breathes in his pages, such as might have been expected from a Voltaire, but not from a Right Rev. Father in God, a Lord Bishop of the English Church. We deplore such a spirit. It is highly to be reprehended.—Oh! have ye never listened to the chirpings of the ascending lark? While nigh his nest amid the stubs, his voice rang in your ear loud and clear; but as he soared up and up into the vaulted blue, his song, though all the same and ever as loud, was to you less and less distinct, until at length, ye had to hush every sound about you, and turn upwards a silent, heedful, patient, quick, and an earnest ear, in order to distinguish and understand the anthem of the morning singer. Well, surely, in a similar frame of mind and feeling, we should endeavour to distinguish and understand the voice of *History*, speaking from the far, far up heights of Moses and Aaron. Her voice is indistinct, because of the intervening clouds of ages, and it demands all care and patience to comprehend the stories which she tells.

5. Brethren, I would we should approach our present task so. I the more particularly desire this, as the theory which I shall advance is contrary to the commonly received theories of the Commentators, Jewish and Christian, as also to the traditions of the Fathers of back centuries. To arrive at a proper understanding of the statements of Moses, has been

* Prof. Gaussen handles these and other thoughts most admirably.

my one object, but finding myself brought to conclusions opposed to theologians revered for their learning and piety, I hesitated to make *public* statements, until I had confirmed my mind beyond misgivings.

Without more words, to the subject matter.

6. The Bishop Colenso's first position I contraverted in a former sermon; his second, which runs through the whole remaining portion of his book, will occupy our attention on the present occasion.

It is this:—

*The Bible says that six hundred thousand men, from twenty years old and upward, and descendants of Jacob, left Egypt with Moses,—and the narrative which Moses gives concerning them is full of inconsistencies and manifestly untrue,—therefore the Books of Moses are not to be believed in; are not of God.**

In support of this position, he appeals to sundry avowed impossibilities, such as:—so prodigious an increase from seventy souls; Moses being able to address them all collectively; the supply of arms and tents for so many; the feeding of their cattle and sheep; the priest performing the duties laid down in the law for so huge a host; and others.†

7. Now, inasmuch as his position and supporting objections, *all* are based upon the number of the Israelites, the question which I shall propound and consider will be this:—

Does Moses tell us that about six hundred thousand men of Israel followed him out of Egypt?

Unhesitatingly I answer,—NO!

If I can establish this answer, the Bishop's objections fall to the ground; and shall be as harmless to the Church as the froth of the sea, when it falls upon the shore.

Now for the proof.

8. SAYS THE BIBLE:—Exodus xii. 37. “And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot *that were men*‡, beside children, and a mixed multitude, &c:—”

(2.) Again, thirteen months afterwards, Num. i. we find Israel in the wilderness of Sinai; when Moses and Aaron separate the tribes, one from the other, and each tribe into its “families” or kinships, and into its patriarchal houses, or “houses of fathers.”§ This done, a conscription of men “able

* Colenso, secs. 168, 170, 172.

† Colenso, table of contents.

‡ Literally “600,000 afoot, strong ones.”

§ So Dr. Gæddes.

What our English Bible says. to go forth to war" is made from each tribe, (Levi excepted Num. i. 47,) and all being twenty years of age and upwards. The numbers of each tribe are put down separately, and an *apparent* addition of the whole made in v. 46, "All they that were numbered were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty."

(3.) In the following chap. we have the tribes distributed into their proper positions, as a travelling camp; and each addition is made to correspond with the total addition in v. 32, "six hundred thousand and three thousands and five hundred and fifty."

(4.) Again, at the time of the numbering, Moses was commanded to take a tax of half a shekel from "every one that passeth among them that are numbered." Exodus xxx. 13. This was done, and in Exodus xxxviii. 25, we read, "And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was a hundred talents and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels." Exactly half a shekel each for 603,550 men, *if* the talent is valued at 3,000 shekels, for which there is no other warrant than this single text.*

(5.) Also, soon after the Israelites left Sinai and began to enter the wilderness of Paran, they complained of the manna and lusted for flesh, and in speaking to the Lord on this occasion Moses says, "The people among whom I am are six hundred thousand footmen." Num. xi. 21.†

(6.) Once more, just prior to the decease of Moses, over thirty-eight years after the first numbering, the Israelites are numbered a second time. The reckonings are made in exactly the same order, and recorded in the same manner. Each tribe (Levi excepted) by its families and houses of fathers. "These were the numbered of the children of Israel, six hundred thousand and a thousand seven hundred and thirty," Num. xxvi. 51; and in v. 64. we read, "but among these, there was not a man of them, who were numbered in the wilderness of Sinai—save Caleb and Joshua."

Sirs, these are the passages of the Pentateuch relied upon for the assertion that 600,000 men, over twenty years of age, left Egypt with Moses. Upon the surface, the matter would scarcely seem to allow of a different meaning; the words and figures appear so intelligible and exact. But indeed, they bear a vastly different interpretation, as we shall presently see.

9. Now the *Septuagint*‡ version of the Old Testament appears to uphold the same idea of 600,000 individual men over twenty years of age; and the Jewish *Targum of Onkelos*§ has it, "About 600,000 men on foot, besides versions, children or families, and a multitude of strangers, &c." The *Targum of Palestine*|| runs thus, "And the sons of Israel moved forth from Pilusin towards Succoth a hundred and thirty thousand, protected there by seven clouds of glory on their four sides, and one above them, that

* This a singular fact, and materially affects the value of the present Heb. text.

† Literally, "600,000 afoot, is the people among whom am I."

‡ Ex. xii. 37, and xxxix. 3.

§ Onkelos, Bk. Shemoth, Bo el Pharaoh.

|| Jonathan Ben Uzziel, in loc. transl. by Etheridge.

neither hail nor rain might fall upon them, nor that they should be burned by the heat of the sun; one beneath them that they might not be hurt by thorns, serpents, or scorpions; and one went before them, to make the valleys even and the mountains low, and to prepare them a place of habitation." But while the good Jonathan Ben Uzziel was contemplating the fiction of the seven clouds of glory, he forgot he had told us, the sons of Israel were 130,000, so he adds, "And they were about 600,000 men, journeying on foot, none riding on horses, except the children, five to every man; and a multitude of strangers, 240 myriads, went up with them." Nor is *Josephus** more satisfactory; he says, "Now the entire multitude of those that went out, including the women and children, was not easy to be numbered; but those that were of an age fit for war, were 600,000;" but in the very same chap. he betrays his utter want of thought, in saying the Hebrews had 600,000 fighting men; he writes, "Now when the Egyptians had overtaken the Hebrews, they prepared to fight them, and by their multitude drove them, (the Hebrews) into a narrow place, for their number was 600 chariots with 50,000 horsemen and 200,000 footmen, all armed," less than *half* the number of the Hebrews. I think I may safely say, these represent fairly the Jewish opinion of the number of Israelites that left Egypt with Moses. I have neither met with, nor heard of, any other accepted opinion.

10. As might have been expected, our Christian commentators have followed the Jewish in this matter; though they have brought to light difficulties and discrepancies scarcely acknowledged by the Jews. But the learning and talents of *Reyher*, *Scheuchzer*, and *Michaelis*, those giants in Biblical research, have not proved wholly equal to the task of solving this difficulty of the numbers of Israel. These, and a large number of other commentators and writers, I have examined, as far as my time and means have allowed me, and though I really love many of them for their works' sake, and glory in the possession of their vast treasury of erudition, yet on this question of the number of Israel, I have closed their books with a secret feeling of dissatisfaction and uneasiness. Nay, I have turned from the explanations of *Hengstenberg*, *Kurtz*, *Havernick* and *Kalisch*, though displaying wondrous ingenuity, with not much less sorrowfulness and petulance of spirit, than I have experienced from the remarks of *Patrick*, *Scott*, and *Clarke*, on the same subject. They none of them afforded me that easy, natural, unstrained solution of difficulties, which every Bible reader discovers in the early history of Israel, and which solution I felt sure was to be found in the Bible itself; for hitherto, in all difficulties the Book of God has proved its own interpreter.—Ye know, a sparrow on his twig may detect what the strong sun-staring eye of the eagle may fail to see; and the small spring, just bubbling up among the pebbles of the hedge-row, may be as sweet, as pure, as good, as the crystal stream that flows down from the craggy heights, and seeks the bed of the ocean; so I offer no apology for differing from the fathers of wisdom.†

* Ant. 2. ch. 15.

† Indeed, it cannot be matter of surprise, that the ancient polity of the Jewish people was lost or misunderstood, when we remember the alteration of the whole constitution in the time of the kings, and the awful results of the Captivities.

11. Note first:—Ex. vi. 16. "These are the names of the sons of Levi, according to their generations,—Gorshon, *Kohath*, and Merari;" v. 18. "And the sons of Kohath,—*Amram*, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel;" v. 20. "And Amram took him Jochebed, his father's sister, to wife, and she bare him *Aaron and Moses*;" v. 26. "These are that Aaron and Moses, ^{Concerning} to whom the Lord said, bring out the children of Israel from the ^{Israel in} land of Egypt, according to their armies, or rather, assemblings, ^{Egypt.} gatherings;" and vii. 7. "Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh."

Now we learn from this, three facts:—1. That Moses and Aaron were only great grandsons of Levi, one of Jacob's twelve sons;—2. That consequently the Israelites were not more than 200 years in Egypt;— and 3. That the tribe of Levi did not have very large families.

But it may be said, not unlikely some generations are wholly omitted, only chief ones being mentioned; let us see again. Take up casually the tribe of Judah. Turn to Gen. xl. xii. "The sons of Judah; Er and Onan, Shelah, and *Pharez* and Zarah; and the sons of Pharez were *Hezron* and Hamul;" 1 Chron. ii. 9, "The sons of Hezron that were born unto him; Jerahmeel, *Ram*, and Caleb;" v. 10, "And Ram begat *Animadab*; and Animadab begat *Nahshon*;" and in Num. i. 7, *Nahshon* is selected as numerator of the tribe of Judah at the numbering in Sinai.

Here again we learn; 1. That Nahshon was only *great-grandson* of Hezron, who was brought into Egypt a "little one" with his grandfather Judah; 2. That consequently the Israelites were not, of necessity, in Egypt more than two hundred years; and 3. That the tribe of Judah did not increase miraculously.

And ye may take any of the prominent names of the twelve tribes, and the same three facts will be forced upon your minds.

12. What then? Am I to believe that in about 200 years there sprung from less than seventy men who entered Egypt with Jacob, some 600,000 men who left it with Moses? And in order that such a vast multitude might leave with Moses, must I believe that during those 200 years each father had some score or more sons and as many daughters, just excepting those few whose genealogies are given by Moses; further, that they married at fifteen or sixteen during those 200 years, though their fathers did not so before them, nor their sons after them; and yet more, that polygamy prevailed among them to a fearful extent.* I confess, ye insult my understanding by telling me that I must believe these things. I *cannot* believe. Perhaps they are more happy, who have a more unhesitating faith! *But is it so?* Must I adopt the common idea that 600,000 fighting men left Egypt with Moses; or, acknowledge Moses to have fictitiously

* The general reader may see these points urged by Scheuchzer, in Baxter's Treasury, or in Dr. A. Clarke's Commentary: also in the works of the authors I have already mentioned. Bishop Colenso certainly answers some of them in a very straightforward manner.

exaggerated the numbers? Must I adopt the unhappy issues I have named, touching the extraordinary increase of the children of Israel; *or*, the still more unhappy issue, that the narrative of Moses is, what Bishop Colenso calls, "historically untrue," in other words, lies and truth commingled? Must it be one or other? Nay, now; I say, I *cannot* believe the former; I *will not* believe the latter.

Let us on with our research.

13. In *Numbers* i. 2, we have God's order to Moses, "Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, rather, take ye the head of every company;* after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of names, every male by their polls; from twenty years old and upward, all that are able, or every one able, to go to war in Israel." In v. 18, "And they assembled all the congregation together . . . and they declared their pedigrees *וירדו* rather, and they brought forth themselves, by or with their families, to the house of their fathers, with the number of the names one by one, from twenty years old and upwards."† In v. 3, we read, "Thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies." Now the word *צבא* sometimes means, *army*, yet as no army was yet constituted in Israel, it must evidently bear its more original meaning, *assembly* or *host*, and signify the whole mass of men, women and children, of each tribe, out of whom the men above twenty years old, and fit for war, were to be selected.‡ Again, in v. 21, we read, "Those that were numbered of them, of the tribe of Reuben, were forty and six thousand and five hundred." And each tribe, Levi excepted, is entered in like manner. Here, then, we learn:—1. That all Israel was separated into its twelve tribes; 2. Each tribe into families or kinships, and which, from the second census, *Numb.* xxvi, we find to have consisted mostly of the nearest descendants of the patriarch, Jacob's family; 3. That each of these families consisted of a number of households, comprising the head, or father, his wife, sons, daughters, servants, oxen, asses, sheep, &c.,§ which household appears to have occupied one tent; and further we learn, that a record of these households was taken, and a register made of such men, as were fit to go forth to war, when called upon, from twenty years old and upwards.

14. Now, all this being intelligible and natural, the evident meaning of the words of Moses; the next question to be solved is, what is intended by saying, "Those that were numbered of them, of the tribe of Reuben, were forty and six thousand and five hundred?" Does it mean, that in the tribe of Reuben, there were 46,500 men, fit to go to war, if need be? Upon a superficial reading such appears to be the sense; and so it is commonly understood by the commentators I have referred to, and by Bishop Colenso. But let us turn to the Bible again; we shall soon convince ourselves, Moses meant nothing of the kind.

15. Ye remember that from the tribe of *Levi*, Moses was not to enrol

* Take ye the *sum* *רשם* should be *the head* as in v. 4, and again in v. 16.

† See Dr. Boothroyd and Dr. Geddes. ‡ Bishop Horsley.

§ See the affair of Achan, *Johua* vii. 14–24, which will illustrate this point.

any man for war. "Only thou shall not take the sum of them *among* the children of Israel, but thou shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, &c.," Numb. i. 49. "Behold I have taken the Levites from

among the children of Israel, instead of all the firstborn," iii. 12. Numbering of the Levites. So they were numbered by themselves, "after the house of their fathers, by their families, every male from a month old and upward," iii. 15.

Now the sons of Levi were *three*; Gershon, Kohath, Merari, Gen. xlv. 11. With these he came into Egypt; and they founded the three great families of the tribe. According to the register of Moses, these three families consisted of male persons from a month old:—

The Gershonites of 7,000 and 500. Num. iii. 22.

The Kohathites of 8,000 and 300. Num. iii. 28.*

The Merarites of 6,000 and 200. Num. iii. 34.

Making a total of 21,000 and 1,000, or, as recorded in v. 39, "twenty and two thousand." I grant, that upon the face, these statements seem to carry the idea, that in the tribe of Levi, there were 22,000 males from a month old and upwards. Their apparent explicitness has disarmed the suspicions of critics; while at the same time, it has taxed the great learning and ingenuity of the best of men, to explain how it comes to pass that *Levi* should have 22,000 males from a *month* old, and most of the other tribes have *twice and thrice as many* males from *twenty years* old. At length we find a Bishop, by this, and similar difficulties of figures, driven from the seats of the Christian wise and good, and numbering himself with the unbelievers and the heathen.

16. But in truth, Sirs and Brethren, Moses never intended to be so understood. Happily the Bible explains itself. We have in various parts, sundry genealogical lists. Now it so chanced that we Male genealogy of the tribe of Levi are able to put together the tribe of *Levi*,† and so obtain a clue to the meaning of the numbering of Moses. Will ye kindly follow me closely?

The *sons* of Levi were *three*, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Gen. xlv. 11, Num. iii. 16, 1 Chron. vi. 1. These all died in Egypt.

The *grandsons* of Levi were *eight*; Gershon begat Libni and Shimei; Kohath begat Amram, Izar, Hebron, and Uzziel; and Merari begat Mahli and Mushi. Num. iii. 18—20; 1 Chron. vi. 16—19. These also must have died in Egypt.

Now the *great-grandsons* of Levi (of whom Moses and Aaron were two) were those numbered in Sinai. We have all their names preserved in

* I presume that Kennicott's explanation, or Hourbigant's, touching this error of 600 instead of 300 would be readily accepted by all.

† This results from the Levites being separated for the most important and sacred offices.

the Bible. Collected together they amount to *twenty-four*; viz., of *Libni*, 8, Jehiel, Zethan and Joel, 1 Chron. xxiii. 8; of *Shimei*, 4, Jahath, Zina, Jeush and Beriah, 1 Chron. xxiii. 10; of *Amram*, 2, Aaron and Moses, Exod. vi. 20; of *Izar*, 3, Korah, Nepheg and Zithi, Exod. vi. 12; of *Hebron*, 4, Jeriah, Amarial, Jahaziel and Jekameam, 1 Chron. xxiii. 19; of *Uzziel*, 3, Mishal, Elzaphan, and Zithri, Exod. vi. 22; of *Mahli*, 2, Eleazar and Kish, 1 Chron. xxiii. 22; and of *Mushi*, 3, Mahli, Eder, and Jeremoth, 1 Chron. xxiii. 23. In all, twenty-four men, heads of households at the time of the numbering. But *Aaron* and his household were separated from the tribe, Exod. xxviii. 1. It does not appear that the household of Moses was separate; on the contrary, 1 Chron. xxiii. 14. But we further find that because *Jeush and Beriah* had few sons, "they were in *one* reckoning according to their father's house," 1 Chron. xxiii. 11;* and we further find, that *Eleazar* had no sons, 1 Chron. xxiii. 22, consequently would not be numbered as a separate household. We have, then, to deduct from the twenty-four households of the tribe of Levi at the time of the numbering by Moses, the households of Aaron, Beriah, and Eleazar, *three*; which leave *twenty-one households or families*, as the true number of the tribe of Levi.

17. Now we have seen (sec. 15) that Moses says they amounted to twenty-one thousands and one thousand. Is it not evident then that when Moses says this tribe consisted of twenty-one *thousands*, he was understood by the children of Israel to mean twenty-one *households or families*? We have seen that they were assembled by families to be numbered; is it not clear, then, that when Moses writes, the tribe of Judah numbered forty-six thousands and five hundreds, he was understood as saying and writing, *not* that there were 46,500 men in the tribe, *but* that there were *forty-six households or families*, and that the tribe possessed altogether *five hundred men*? At least, may it not be so?

18. Sirs and brethren, I would not dare, by this interpretation, to overthrow the opinions of the ancient and modern learned theologians, if I were not convinced that I am right. Verily 'tis no small matter to essay,—to bring down the number of the *men* of Israel † who left Egypt with Moses, from 600,000 to 6,000! But so it is. Moses himself has written it. It is truth, and I cannot refuse to accept it. Indeed why should I refuse. It at once destroys all the strong objections of the open sceptic and of the Christian doubter; it at once destroys all need of the ingenious and far-fetched conjectures and calculations of our commentators! Thank God, this blessed Book is true to itself. The book of the Bishop Colenso, and all books similar, are but public witnesses against their authors, accusing them, in stinging words, of utter disregard of the Lord's command, "SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES."

But, I pray ye, hear me further. I would the more assure ye that my

* Does not this phrase speak volumes, concerning the meaning of Moses?

† Including the "mixed multitude," at least such of them as were "men of twenty years and upwards," and were circumcised. But this latter is a question,

interpretation is correct. I cannot in a sermon bring forward all I would, but I will adduce a few thoughts.

19. If ye will take the trouble to trace the genealogies of any of the twelve tribes, ye will confirm yourselves in the belief that Moses meant households or families, or heads of households, and *not* thousands. No other tribe than Levi has its genealogies complete and perfect; but ye will quickly recognise, as ye add name to name in *any* tribe, the impossibility of its numbering its men by thousands, and the great probability of the conclusion I myself have arrived at. Judah, Ephraim, and Simeon, afford easy opportunity for testing this assertion.

20. Again, the word translated *thousand*, is in Heb. אלף. This word is capable of many significations.* It sometimes means a *thousand*; at other times, a *chief*, a *captain*, a *prince*, a *leader*; sometimes a *herd of kine or oxen*; and at other times, a *family* or *household* or *band of persons*. Now what I would maintain in this, that in this numbering of the people, when Moses used the word אלף which our translators have rendered by *thousand*, they should have rendered it by its other meaning, *family* or *household* or *band*. I am not arbitrarily giving this meaning to the word Moses uses, as is evident from many passages to which I might call your attention. Notice two or three. In Judges vi. 15, Gideon says to the Lord, "Oh, my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my *family* (Hebrew, my *thousand*) is poor in Manasseh, and I am least in my father's house;" that is, "the thousand or household to which I belong is poor, and moreover I am not the chief or head, but one of the youngest brethren."†

This same meaning of *family* or *household* the word אלף evidently bears in other places. For example, in the third commandment, Exodus xx. 6, God says He will visit "the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" of them that hate him; that is, the *family* will suffer through the sins of the father. It is immediately added, "but show mercy unto *thousands* of them that love me;" what can this mean but that, as in the one case, the *families* will surely suffer through the *sins* of their fathers, so the *thousands* or *families* will as surely be blessed through the *well-doing* of their God-loving fathers? Can it mean anything else? And is it not true in the experience of us all? Again in 1 Sam. x. 19, ye read that when Israel wanted a king, Samuel says, "Present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your *thousands*." They do so; and the *tribe* of Benjamin is taken. Now what read ye? "And when Samuel had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their *families*, the *family* of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken." Can there be any doubt here, that *thousands* and *families*, or *heads of families* are synonymous terms?

21. I might quote other passages, but must not. Enough has been advanced to assure ye, that when I say Moses, in dividing the people of

* Any Hebrew lexicon will shew this; and the English reader may satisfy himself by consulting Bagster's Englishman's Hebrew Con.

† See Rosenmuller in loc. and A. Clarke.

Israel into *thousands* did not mean *companies of a thousand men each*, but *families or households*, I am not without philological basis.*

22. But yet more. If Moses really brought with him 600,000 men over twenty years of age, able to fight, the whole story of the doings in the desert challenges our common sense, and makes a demand upon our faith which, for one, I am not prepared to give. Is it not most extraordinary that so huge a host should be defeated by a small number of Amalekites, Numbers xiv. 45? And still more extraordinary, that after making great allowances for those of their number killed by plagues and warnings, some 500,000 of them died natural deaths in the wilderness, in the small Occurrences in the desert space of thirty-eight years, although at the commencement of those thirty-eight years not one of the 500,000 was under twenty rendered intelligible. years of age?† And similar marvels arrest us at every step. But apply the interpretation I have given to the numberings mentioned by Moses, and all these difficulties vanish; and ye will find the story of their doings perfectly natural and credible.—Did only some *six hundred households or families* of Israelites leave Egypt, and with them a mixed multitude? Then we at once recognise the need for the prayers and strong intercessions of Moses on the hill, while the people were fighting with the Amalekites in the plain, Exodus xvii. 13; and we discern the kindness of the prayer-hearing God, in giving the people, who had never been trained to war in Egypt, victory over the mighty Amalekites.‡—Did the tribe of Levi consist of some *twenty families*, and not of 20,000? Then we can understand how at the sinning with the golden calf, “*all the sons of Levi*” took their swords, and at the word of Moses, passed through the camp and slew the idolaters, “and there fell of the people that day about 3000 persons (*not men*),” Exodus xxxii. 26;§ and we perceive how the people would acknowledge in this great slaughter, the Lord’s hatred of idolatry.—Is it *so*? That the tribes of Reuben, and Simeon, and Gad, who occupied the south side of camp, numbered 150 households, or families, and some 1450 men among them; and *not* a 150,000 individual fighting men?¶ Is it *so*? Then now we can understand the story of the rebellion of Korah and the 250 sons of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, and the congregation of the three tribes on the south side, Numb. xvi. ¶ We see the necessity for the interference of the Lord *by miracle*, in a rebellion of about half the Levitical tribe, and a fourth of the whole congregation of Israel; and we recognise how the destruction of the 250 wicked Levites, of Korah and his household, and of

* אֱלֵפִים hic videntur esse *cognationes, familiae*, qua significatione hæc vox etiam occurrit, Judges vi. 15; Micah v. 1, coll. Arab אֵלֶף, *conjunctus, familiaris fuit*. Rosen. Numbers i. 16.

† Compare Exodus xxxii. 28; Numbers xi. 33; xvi. 7, 35, 49; xxi. 6; xxv. 9; and Numbers xxvi. 63—65.

‡ Concerning the ancient Amalekites and their country, see Osburn’s Ancient Egypt, which strikingly confirms Moses,

§ This occurred *prior* to the numbering, and included men, women, and those of the “mixed multitude.” אִישׁ here sing. may, as in other places, so here, mean *in all, together*; certainly *not men*.

¶ Interpret the numbers in Numb. ii. 10—15, in the manner I have laid down.

¶ That the 250 were of Levi’s tribe is evident from v. 7, 9, 17, 35.

fourteen families, or heads of families, with some 700 men of the three rebellious tribes, would effectually check any further disturbances.—One other instance. The Israelites are in the plains of Moab, and some of the tribes take to wife the daughters of Moab, especially is mentioned the tribe of Simeon, one of the three on the south side. Numb. xxv. 14. For this gross licentiousness, the Lord bids Moses, "Take all the *heads* of the people and hang them up before the Lord against the sun." The judges execute the command, and not 24,000 individuals are slain, but "those that perished through this plague were twenty-four households or families;" that is to say, no less than twenty-four heads of households, of whom Zimri, mentioned in v. 14, was one, were found to have perpetrated this abomination of "whoredom with the daughters of Moab;" they, with all theirs, were slain. Upon no other interpretation is the narrative intelligible in its several parts.*

23. I might refer to other matters, which, upon the basis of Israel consisting of some 600 households or families, and *not* of 600,000 Other matters made men, are not only reconcilable, but most simple and intelligible: plain. such, for example, the number of the firstborn; the size of the camp; the size of the Tabernacle; the war with the Midianites; the possession of sufficient arms; and the capability of the priests performing all the duties of their office.† And I might also refer to instances and narratives in the Books of Joshua and Judges; glaring impossibilities, if הָאֵל is to be understood *thousands*, but simple and artless, with evident marks of truth upon the face of them, if it is to be rendered *families*, or *heads* or *chiefs of family bands*.‡ But I forbear; these ye can examine for yourselves, while sitting by your firesides these winter evenings. The search shall prove to ye highly interesting, and will much confirm ye in the historic truthfulness of the writings of Moses. For this present I have done.

24. Sirs and Brethren,—Judge ye, if I have satisfactorily proved my position,—that Moses does *not* tell us 600,000 men followed him when he left Egypt. Judge ye for yourselves, whether Moses *may* not mean, nay DOES not mean, that 600 family bands or households followed him when he left Egypt. I thank God, I have satisfied my own conscience. May I hope that I have satisfied yours?

25. In my former sermon I said (Sec. 10), "I do arraign Bishop Colenzo before the bar of honest judgment, for a wicked attempt to subvert the faith and confidence of general readers in the Bible." Although the remark is strong, I would emphasise it to-night; for the want of knowledge touching Bible matters, displayed in his book, could scarcely be tolerated in an ordinary reader, and is most highly Concluding thoughts touching the Bishop and his objections.

* This division of the camp was minus the largest number of families at the second census. Numb. xxvi.

† All which Bishop Colenzo calls in question, as I stated in sec. 6.

‡ E.g. Joshua iv, 12, comp. Numbers xxxii. 16, 17, 25, 26, and Judges xx. It must ever be borne in mind that the *family* was the unit in Jewish polity; and that not until kings arose was an *army* constituted, separate and apart from family bands. See very good article on *Army*, in Dr. Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible,"

culpable in one who has had the finest advantages of our day, and who has been counted worthy of a Bishop's throne.* Ah me! Unfortunate Zulus, with such a teacher! Thrice unfortunate Church with such a Bishop!

What! when the Bishop's objections are capable of so natural a solution, and evidently so correct a one, shall *his* book be held in any esteem at all? When it is palpable that they all turn upon one single Hebrew word,—a word too, bearing many significations,—can we do other than believe him obstinately bent on drowning himself in the unbeliever's restless sea? An Arab comes rushing into your tent with a complaint against one of his fellow-servants; “Sir,” says he, “he’s a גמל, a camel.” Would the Bishop insist that the man meant the poor fellow was turned into a camel? Would he not instantly adopt that other meaning of the word, *obstinate, sulky*, which are the characteristics of the camel? Nay, now, too, would he deal with the ancient history of Egypt by Manetho, as he deals with the Bible? Because, as far as we can understand him, he seems to make out lines of Egyptian kings to extend some twelve thousand years, would the Bishop accuse Manetho of writing falsehoods, and refuse to accept his work, though the greater part of it has been proved to be correct, by comparison with the hieroglyphic records of Egypt itself? We know he would not. Then, wherefore, because he cannot understand the *numerals* of the Bible, should he overset the *truthfulness* of the whole? Wherefore, in the name of common honesty, should he set aside all the immense mass of evidence in favour of the Bible, as the book of God, God-indicted, God-spelled, God-preserved, for the small matter I have endeavoured to make clear this night? Brethren, ’tis a shame, a burning shame, that a man of his position and parts should not have been better employed. May the Lord, good, wise, and loving, bring him to his right mind.

In my former sermon, I called to your mind some of the weighty evidences which have gathered in the course of time round this blessed Book. I would add a few more thoughts to those, and so close.

26. Ah, Sirs! This Bible has in all ages had its adversaries. It is now sixteen hundred years since Malchus Porphyry, whom Jerome calls “a rabid dog against Christ,”† wrote fifteen books against Christianity; the first of which was entirely devoted to the bringing together of all the contradictions which he maintained he had found in the Bible; while the fourth was directed against the Pentateuch. From Porphyry† down to unbelieving Colenso, unceasing endeavours have been made to upset the inspiration of the Bible. But in vain they have all laboured. The Bible still stands; still triumphs. Do the clouds which come up over the sky extinguish the sun? Nay, is not the sun’s light the clearer after the darkness of the night; and his glory the greater after the dreariness of

* The Bishop’s Hebrew criticisms have been well handled, and in a deservedly free manner, by the Rev. Jos. M’Caul, “Colenso’s Criticisms Criticised” Wertheim & Co.

† *Rabidum adversus Christum canem*. Preface to Eccles. writers.

‡ He was a philosopher of Tyre. His doctrines were considered so pernicious that a copy of his work against Christianity was publicly burnt by order of Theodosius, A.D. 388.

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winter? Is it not during the shades of night that the palm-tree gathers moisture and strength against the time of fruit-bearing? Is it not then that the flower drinks in the drops of dew; so gathering fresh sweetness and beauty for the coming morrow? So is it with this blessed Bible. And like a tree, which when the winds blow fiercely, only the more deeply strikes its roots down into the earth, and the more tenaciously embraces the soil, so every fresh attack upon this Book of the Lord has but more deeply struck its truth into the heart of the world, and constrained mankind at large the more tightly to clasp it.

27. Oh; be assured, the whole Bible is of God. It bears on every page, "Holiness unto the Lord." When it speaks of God, it represents Him as the greatest and holiest Being in the universe. When it speaks of man, it is in such terms, that every man's conscience bears witness to its truth. Its precepts are all holy. They begin by requiring holiness in the thoughts and affections; then in the words; then in the conduct. Ye open the Bible, and ye find yourself undoubtedly in the presence of God. Ye *feel* the breath of God is in its pages; portraying its characters; writing its histories; mingling its incidents; speaking its doctrines; enforcing its precepts. And, in the person and atonement of Jesus Christ—the forgiveness of sins through his blood—the gratuitous justification only of the repenting—the love of Christ as the constraining motive to holy obedience—the death and resurrection of man—the day of judgment—the retributions of eternity,—in all these, ye cannot but perceive the divine authorship of the Bible. I appeal to your consciences.

28. I might further appeal to the grandeur and elevation of design which the Bible unfolds, and which none other book in the world attempts: how it tells ye of a method, a scheme of operations, laid out by the Eternal God, when there were no depths and no fountains of water, and before ever the earth was; how the first expression of this mighty design was made in the creation of the world; how the fall of his new creature, man, lead to the enlargement of the plan, and to the most marvellous exhibition of his heart's desire, by the death on Calvary of the first-born of Heaven; and how the time occupied in the carrying out of His sublime design extends to a period distant and unknown, when these heavens and this earth shall flee away, and redeemed mankind dwell with God in immortality. I might appeal to this, and ask, "did ever man dream this, which the Bible unfolds?"

29. Or I might appeal to its perfect harmony. Here are history and laws, narratives and precepts, prophecies and doctrines, all mingled together inseparably. Yet there is a perfect harmony in all its varied contents. Every writer agrees with himself, and all agree with one another and with facts. These Scriptures were composed not in a single age, but in the progress of 1600 years; yet the views and opinions introduced are ever the same. They were not written by one man, but by men in different classes of society, imbued with different prejudices, men of science, men illiterate; yet consistency pervades all their writings. Most of the writers were unacquainted with each other; yet in sentiment, in design, there are the same facts, the same principles, the same holy object. On

your consciences, were not the writers of the Bible inspired? Is not Paul right when he tells Timothy, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God?"

30. Aye, my Brethren, this truth shall stand in spite of the swelling waves of opposition, and the angry storms of unbelief, which never cease their roarings on the shores of time. Never shall the Bible be cast loose from its moorings in the hearts and consciences of men. It shall outlive all on earth that bear it witness. Though those "Houses of Life," amid the sands of Egypt have weathered the summers and winters, and the changeful and devastating scenes of three or four tens of centuries of years,—ever bearing an undeviating and marvellous testimony to the historic accuracy of the early books of the Bible; *yet* those stony tombs shall crumble and perish out of time, *but the words of MOSES shall never age nor die.* Though the ruins of Babylon and Nineveh, of Edom and Tyre, should recall the voices they have uttered from their "long, quiet home," and yet again be buried in oblivion, their very memory lost in a surging sea of new peoples and strange tongues,—*still the words of the PROPHETS shall never be forgotten.* Yea, though every tittle of evidence, which has been so wondrously accumulated these past 500 years; though it were possible that in some huge conflagration of Christendom, every written page should be consumed, and their remembrance obliterated from among men; *yet*, while there is a sinner found to read and hear, and a "new creature in Christ Jesus" found to preach, *the words of JESUS shall never be lost.* "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," shall ring to the bottom of man's soul, and in reply he shall put his finger on the Apostle's words, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

31. True, there will constantly arise passages, of which we shall fail to discover either the use or the beauty. The like partial knowledge marks our acquaintance with the whole universe of God. The starry worlds yonder are too high for us: the caverns of the ocean, the bowels of the earth, are too deep for us; the feathered ones of the air are too fleet, and the creeping creatures of the soil too minute; we cannot discern their use and beauty. So is it with parts of Revelation; but the light of immortality will bring out their hidden radiance. As in the case of some deep crystalline cave, into the which light has been ushered, after a long consignment to darkness, *so* the dawning of the day of Jesus Christ, bathing all things in a flood of light, will pierce into every part of the Bible, revealing everywhere gems unseen till then, and causing them to dazzle with unconceived splendour. Oh! then will the beauty, the wisdom, the oneness of the Bible be fully manifested; and the redeemed unto God, by faith in the blood of the Lamb, shall be filled with ravishing admiration, with ever fresh raptures, and with untellable joy.

"OPEN THOU OUR EYES, O LORD, THAT WE MAY BEHOLD WONDROUS THINGS OUT OF THY LAW."

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